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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2520

Aug. 23, 1991

KUWAIT'S FOOD INDUSTRY faces difficult challenges after the Persian Gulf War, and U.S. food exporters doing business there should keep in mind that living & working conditions remain difficult, USDA foreign ag experts say. General conditions are improving, according to U.S. ag trade officials, but Kuwait's food sector has been left in disarray. Only a small number of food importers & wholesalers are in operation, but more are re-opening weekly. Shuaiba is the only operating port in Kuwait. Most food imports have been arriving by truck via Saudi Arabia or by ship from Dubai. **Contact: Bill Cox (202) 447-7939.**

FARM LABOR -- During the week of July 7 - 13, there were 3.68 million people working on the Nation's farms & ranches, USDA says. Self-employed farm operators accounted for 1.58 million of the total workers, along with 611 thousand unpaid workers, and 1.12 million workers hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees working on farms & ranches made up the remaining 374 thousand workers. Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$5.57 per hour during the survey week. This rate was up 27 cents from a year earlier. **Contact: Tom Kurtz (202) 475-3228.**

INDIAN SUB-OFFICES -- In an effort to ensure consistency & coordination in the services it provides to American Indians, USDA is establishing consolidated suboffices on American Indian reservations. "Our policy is to provide opportunities for all rural Americans by coordinating our agricultural and rural development programs within each state, county and tribal jurisdiction," says Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan. **Contact: George Holcomb (202) 447-5746.**

FRUIT DOWN -- Counter to a long-term upward trend, the value of 1989-90 citrus production was down from 1988-89 because of the December 1989 freeze in Florida. The farm value of non-citrus crops continued an upward trend in 1990, setting a new record of \$5.5 billion, USDA economists say. The decrease in value of citrus production more-than-offset the higher value for non-citrus fruits, causing the total value of all fruit production to decline 3 percent in 1990 from a year earlier. **Contact: Boyd Buxton (202) 219-0884.**

COCKROACH BAIT LICENSED -- USDA has granted a license to Air Vent Inc. of Peoria, Ill., for a new, environmentally-sound bait which uses corn mash to lure at least 15 species of cockroaches to their death. Known as the "Insect Control System," the bait was developed by USDA scientists and is patented by USDA. "This bait is environmentally sound because the only significant release of toxicant occurs in the gut of the cockroach," says co-inventor **Richard J. Brenner**. The slow-release insecticide in the bait kills the roach within an hour. **Contact: Richard J. Brenner (904) 374-5937.**

GETTING MORE CALCIUM might ease the stress for women around menstrual time, a 5-1/2 month USDA study suggests. Ten women reported significantly fewer undesirable symptoms associated with the menstrual cycle when they got 1,300 milligrams of calcium rather than 600 mg. U.S. women average a little more than 600 mg in their daily diets. Women in the study experienced fewer PMS-type mood changes, such as irritability, anxiety, crying & depression, while on the higher calcium intake. They also reported fewer negative changes. **Contact: James G. Penland (701) 795-8471.**

MALARIA COMPUTER MODEL -- A USDA computer model called MALSIM (Malaria Simulation Model) predicts how many cases of malaria military officials can expect, given certain weather patterns & control measures. This debilitating & potentially deadly disease is a major concern for military troops stationed abroad. The new program has information about the life cycle of the mosquitoes, including how temperature, moisture & other climatic factors affect their survival. MALSIM predicts the benefits of different control programs, including aerial spraying or troops' use of personal protection. **Contact: Daniel G. Haile (904) 374-5928.**

TAXOL TISSUE CULTURE -- USDA scientists have begun fine-tuning their technique to produce the cancer-fighting drug taxol through tissue culture. Currently the only source of taxol is the bark of the Pacific yew tree. But, an alternate taxol source was developed at USDA's Agricultural Research Service by inventors Donna Gibson, Alice Christen & John Bland. Cells from yew bark are grown in a special lab culture, or "soup," to produce taxol on an experimental basis, Gibson says. **Contact: Donna Gibson (607) 255-0271.**

COW'S BREATH LURES MOSQUITOES -- Cow's breath is helping mosquitoes keel over & die in USDA labs. The mosquitoes are lured by octenol, an element in ruminant breath. USDA entomologist Daniel L. Kline envisions using octenol and carbon dioxide to attract large numbers of mosquitoes to targets baited with an insecticide. "We believe the octenol attracts mosquitoes from far away, while carbon dioxide attracts those that are closer," Kline says. "We think mosquitoes home in on octenol and other components of cow's breath to find a blood host." **Contact: Daniel L. Kline (904) 374-5900.**

ARE YOU FED UP WITH jelly sandwiches that are soggy by lunchtime? USDA scientists have a solution -- an edible wrap that goes inside your sandwich to form a moisture barrier between the jelly & the bread. Preliminary experiments show the wrap can protect bread for two days. Still, research chemist Dominic W.S. Wong cautions that before the product can be used as an edible wrap in home or commercial kitchens, its all-natural ingredients must be approved for food use. **Contact: Dominic W.S. Wong (415) 559-5860.**

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FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1785 -- Brenda Curtis travels to Wisconsin dairy centers to find out current opinion & fact about bovine growth hormone & its possible effects on the dairy industry. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1267 -- Bovine growth hormone; taxol production; it's home canning time; the working rural poor; lightning safety. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1775 -- USDA News Highlights; comments due on '92 farm provisions; BST update; rural workers & poverty; U.S. beef bullish on Japan. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1434 -- Test tube tomato sauce; ripening compound sought; alternative grain crop; health food flour; vitamin A & disease. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wed., Aug. 28, cotton/wool update; Thurs., Aug. 29, export outlook, world tobacco situation; Fri., Aug. 30, ag prices; Tues., Sept. 3, horticultural exports; Wed., Sept. 4, crop/weather update; Thurs., Sept. 5, western Europe outlook. (These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling!)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on food safety for packing back-to-school lunches; Pat O'Leary reports on plant explorers who search the world for plants & valuable germplasm; and Michigan State's Dave Luciani reports on late summer gardening.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA meteorologist Norton Strommen on the weather & crop development; USDA economist Steve MacDonald on ag trade figures; USDA economist Tom Tice on food; USDA economist Ron Gustafson on livestock outlook & the retail prices of red meat & poultry.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Lynn Wyvill reports on low maintenance gardens & Pat O'Leary reports on lyme disease.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- Agriculture Update, five minutes of USDA farm program info, in news desk format with B-Roll footage.

Available on Satellite Westar 4, Transponder 12D (Channel 23), audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT
SATURDAY10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT
MONDAY8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT

OFFMIKE

SALMON & AGRICULTURE -- Gary Stewart (Northwest Ag News Net, Newberg, Ore.) says the big ag story in his area is another environmental impact situation. Three species of wild salmon that go up the Columbia & Snake Rivers are being considered for the endangered species list. To encourage the salmon to breed, the Corps of Engineers, Bonneville & the Bureau of Reclamation are running more water through the system. However, this lowers the water table, which can impact barge movement. Thus, wheat shipments might have to be sent by rail or truck, adding to the cost. In addition, Gary says, some of the water being used to try to increase salmon numbers is unavailable for irrigation.

SPOTTY SHOWERS/STILL DRY -- is what we hear from Jeff Wheeler (KBOA/KTMO, Kennett, Mo.). He says the cotton crop is looking good, but soybeans overall are less than fair. Jeff says late beans are not looking good at all & he rates this year's crops overall as "only fair."

STATE FAIR TIME means lots of farm broadcasters are on location. That's where Randy Rasmussen (KMA, Shenandoah, Iowa) was when we called.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



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Radio-TV Division
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DROUGHT IS STILL A BIG CONCERN in the heartland. Lynn Watts (WOC, Davenport, Iowa) says farmers had to plow under corn fields near the Waupsi River area. Farmers were only getting 1-1/2 bushels of corn per acre there. However, farmers who planted drought-resistant corn hybrids are not affected as much. Lynn says soybeans are looking good because of recent rains.

SIOUX EMPIRE FAIR -- does a lot for agriculture, says Tony Randall (KXRB/KKLS, Sioux Falls, S.D.). Tony says it's a mix of an urban & rural fair & the big hit is the petting zoo. Gives city children a chance to get close to a real live farm animal. S.D. state fair will be in Huron, Aug. 27-Sept. 2. Jeff will cover it.

VACATION TIME for Vic Powell (Chief, USDA Radio & TV). Vic is climbing a mountain in New England. He's also probably doing his favorite sport -- hang gliding. Enjoy, Vic!

BRENDA CURTIS-HEIKEN
Acting Chief, Radio & TV Division